



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

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FB08-029

DEEP WATER GROUPER COMMERCIAL FISHERY CLOSED TO VESSELS FISHING IN THE GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS

The commercial fishery for deep water grouper in the Gulf of Mexico is **closed, effective 12:01 a.m. (local time) May 10, 2008**, through December 31, 2008. NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service has determined the 2008 commercial quota of 1,020,000 pounds of deep water grouper will be reached by this date. During the closure period, no person aboard a vessel for which a commercial permit for reef fish has been issued may fish for or retain misty grouper, snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, Warsaw grouper, or speckled hind in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

Closure of the commercial deep water grouper fishery in the Gulf of Mexico complies with regulations implemented under the Fishery Management Plan for Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and is necessary to protect the Gulf reef fish resource.

The operator of a vessel with a valid reef fish permit having deep water grouper aboard must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such deep-water grouper prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, May 10, 2008. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to sale or purchase of deep water grouper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, May 10, 2008, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

The fishery will remain closed until 12:01 a.m., January 1, 2009. During the closure, vessels with commercial quantities of reef fish on board are prohibited from retaining a recreational bag limit. Thus, a vessel may only have a commercial quantity of reef fish or a recreational bag limit of reef fish.

How can we improve these fishery bulletins?

If you have any suggestions on how we may improve future fishery bulletins, please contact:

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If you would like to receive these fishery bulletins via e-mail as soon as they are published, e-mail SERO.Communications.Comments@noaa.gov and include: (1) "Request for Electronic Fishery Bulletins" in the subject line; and (2) your preferred e-mail address in the body of the e-mail. You will still receive a hard copy of these bulletins through the mail.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

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